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SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU: 2008 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS  
CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR), PART I, DRUGS AND CHEMICAL  
CONTROL

REF: STATE 100970

#### I. SUMMARY

11. Below is Part I, Drugs and Chemical Control, of the 2008 INCSR for Guinea-Bissau. The text is keyed to the format provided in reftel.

12. Guinea-Bissau, a tiny impoverished country in West Africa, has evolved into a major transit hub for narcotics trafficking from South America to Europe. The country, a party to the 1988 United Nations (UN) Drug Convention, provides an opportune environment for traffickers because of its location in relation to Europe, South America and neighboring West African transit points, its lack of enforcement capabilities, its susceptibility to corruption, its porous borders and its linguistic connections to Brazil, Portugal and Cape Verde. The un-policed islands off the coast of Bissau are alleged hubs for the associated problems of arms trafficking and illegal immigration. Corruption, specifically the complicity of government officials at all levels, inhibits both a complete assessment and resolution of the problem. Degeneration of Guinea-Bissau into a narco state is a possibility. END SUMMARY.

#### II. STATUS OF COUNTRY

13. Approximately three times the size of Connecticut, Guinea-Bissau has a population of fewer than 1.8 million persons. The country is also one of the poorest in the world, placing 175th out of 177 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index. Security forces lack the most basic resources. The country possesses no adequate detention facilities, and civil servants are often not paid for months at a time. Guinea-Bissau's history since independence from Portugal in 1974 has been plagued by political instability and civil unrest. The U.S. embassy in Bissau closed in June 1998 due to civil unrest; however, U.S. engagement with the Government of Guinea-Bissau (GOGB) has increased since parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2008 and presidential elections in 2005 were deemed free and fair by the international community. Guinea-Bissau's fragility was underscored, however, by two apparent coup attempts, the first in August and the second in November, 2008.

14. In January, 2008, the United Nations Office for West Africa stated that Guinea-Bissau was on the brink of becoming Africa's first narco state. In his September 29 report to the Security Council, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon warned that the country was evolving from a narcotics transit hub into a &major marketplace in the drug trade.8 The Secretary General proposed the formation of a panel of experts that would investigate narcotics trafficking in Guinea-Bissau with the possible outcome of the imposition of targeted UN sanctions.

¶5. In July, 2008, authorities attempted to seize a grounded plane, originating from Venezuela and believed to have been transporting 500 kilograms of cocaine. The plane,s cargo, however, was unloaded before military personnel allowed judicial police officers to investigate the scene. Authorities successfully interdicted four smaller quantities of cocaine throughout the year. The traffickers were arrested. In general, GOGB drug enforcement efforts remain under-funded and undermanned, allowing international trafficking and the illegal cannabis trade to continue unabated.

¶6. The UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) views Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde -- a former Portuguese colony off the coast of Senegal -- as part of a Lusophone Atlantic network with links to Brazil and Portugal. Due to cultural links and existing air and sea connections, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde are serving as transshipment and possibly processing points for drugs originating in Brazil that are destined for the European market. UNODC,s October 2008 report suggests that traffickers continue to use Guinea-Bissau as a hub for narcotics from South America. Once large shipments of cocaine are off-loaded from planes and boats in Guinea-Bissau, the drugs are disbursed in smaller quantities throughout the region before being shipped out on commercial air flights and other means to Europe.

### III.COUNTRY ACTIONS AGAINST DRUGS IN 2008

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¶7. Policy Initiatives. The GOGB continues to adhere to its 2007 Anti-Narcotics Emergency Plan. The GOGB further has

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welcomed the European Union,s Security Sector Reform Mission, launched in March, 2008. In collaboration with GB officials, the EU mission seeks to restructure and reform the armed forces, the police and the judiciary. The objective is to make the security forces more efficient and accountable. In 2008, representatives from Guinea-Bissau participated in the Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS) counter-narcotics conference in Praia, Cape Verde, and was a signatory to the political declaration that came out of the conference.

¶8. Accomplishments. During 2008, a number of seizures were made. On August 13, three Nigerian nationals were arrested in the Militar neighborhood of Bissau in possession of 160 capsules of cocaine sealed in latex. On September 23, at Osvaldo Vieira International Airport in Bissau, officials seized two belts containing two kilograms of cocaine and arrested a Bissau-Guinean national. On September 25, again at Bissau,s airport, officials seized 180 capsules of cocaine, sealed in latex, and arrested a Bissau-Guinean national. In October, autopsy officials removed 58 capsules of cocaine, sealed in latex, from the interior of a Bissau-Guinean national. The courier died when one or more of the capsules burst open inside of him.

¶9. With support from UNODC, a new headquarters is nearly complete for the judicial police. UNODC, with support from Portugal, also supported the training of 50 new judicial police officers specialized in counter-narcotics. The officers are currently being trained in Brazil.

¶10. In August, authorities reported that they had uncovered an attempted coup d,etat, allegedly organized by the Navy Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto. Na Tchuto, long suspected of being a major facilitator of narcotics trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, eventually fled to the Gambia where officials arrested him then later released him. He remained in exile in the Gambia at year,s end.

¶11. Law Enforcement Efforts. On July 12, a plane from Venezuela landed at the Bissau airport without the requisite

permission. Upon landing, it immediately was cordoned off by Bissau-Guinean military officials and its cargo unloaded. Due to mechanical difficulties, the plane could not again take off. On July 17, the Minister of Justice reportedly learned of the unauthorized plane and ordered the arrest of the crew, who were taken into custody on July 19. Military officials refused to allow the judicial police and international investigators to remove the black box and Global Positioning System apparatus from the plane. On August 19, a judge set bail and released the crew of the plane from custody, despite the issuance of an international arrest warrant against one member and protests by the Minister of Justice and the Prosecutor General. The pilot subsequently disappeared, and the judge was later suspended pending an investigation into possible corruption.

¶12. Given limitations on funding, training, and policy, there is only limited ability to guard against the transit of drugs through Guinea-Bissau. Due to weak enforcement efforts and inadequate record keeping, it is difficult to assess accurately the scope of the drug problem. Police lack the training and equipment to detect drug smuggling. Once arrests are made, there are no adequate detention facilities to hold suspects. There are furthermore no secured vehicles with which to transport suspects.

¶13. Corruption. Corruption is a problem for narcotics law enforcement all over Africa, and Guinea-Bissau is particularly susceptible. The Government does not, as a matter of policy, encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, nor the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. However, anecdotal stories of corruption at the highest levels are common. Observers noted the apparent complicity of military personnel in the July plane incident, and the judge's release of the suspects despite the existence of an international warrant. As of December 31, 2008, the government was four months in arrears in paying civil servant salaries, making law enforcement and security officials further susceptible to bribery.

¶14. Agreements and Treaties. Guinea-Bissau is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, and has signed but not ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the UN Convention against Corruption. The status of the 1999

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UN International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the African Union Convention on Terrorism Finance is not known.

¶15. Cultivation/Production. The extent of cannabis cultivation in the country is unknown. Cannabis cultivation is quite common in the Senegal's southern Casamance region and linked to a more than 20-year-old separatist movement, the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC). As elements of the MFDC frequently find sanctuary on the Guinea-Bissau side of the border with Senegal, it can be assumed that cannabis is cultivated to some degree. There are no known efforts to determine the scope of the cultivation or eradicate it.

¶16. Drug Flow/Transit. The U.S. is not believed to be a destination point for these drugs.

¶17. Domestic Programs. There is no comprehensive GOGB policy for systematic destruction of seized drugs or domestic cannabis nor for the prevention of the transshipment of harder drugs. Enforcement efforts are sporadic and uncoordinated. According to the UN, local drug abuse is a growing problem in Guinea-Bissau, as traffickers occasionally pay their local accomplices with drugs in kind. There are no GOGB efforts targeted specifically to reduce local drug consumption. There are also no GOGB drug treatment programs, although private organizations have established drug rehabilitation centers.

#### IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

¶18. The U.S. Embassy in Bissau closed in June 1998. The U.S. Ambassador to Senegal is accredited there and one U.S. officer assigned to the Embassy in Dakar monitors events there. The U.S. Embassy liaison office opened in Bissau in 2008 and is staffed by two foreign service nationals. During 2008, DEA and FBI representatives visited Bissau to assist in the investigation surrounding the July seizure of the plane from Venezuela. Representatives from AFRICOM and the FBI made frequent visits to Bissau in 2008 to provide technical assistance and to conduct needs assessments.

¶19. The Road Ahead. The USG will continue to work closely with the GOGB to improve the capacity of its narcotics law enforcement officers to investigate and prosecute narcotics crimes. The USG also will seek to identify credible partners within the Bissau-Guinean security forces and will seek to build their capacity to respond to the threat of narcotics trafficking. In recognition of the importance of strengthening broader institutional capacity, the USG will support the EU's efforts to reform the judiciary, and will seek to strengthen the legislative and oversight capacity of the National Assembly. Furthermore, in recognition of the broad role that socio-economic factors play in narcotics trafficking, the USG will seek to promote economic development and political stability.

#### ¶V. STATISTICAL TABLES

¶20. No statistics available

#### VI. CHEMICAL CONTROL

¶21. There are no grounds for adding Guinea-Bissau to the list of chemical control countries at this time.

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